

# HORRORS! NO. 9 SKATE FAMINE RAGES IN NEW YORK

## Though Tearful Women Cry for Them, None Are to Be Had-- Dealers Offer No Hope

By JANE HIXON.

Merely we stride along, slide along, slide along. Merely we jump along, o'er the cold gray ice.

HURRY! Hurry! Get your gliders. We're going for a spin. What? You don't skate. I hope you are not trying to be eccentric, my dear. Then, besides, you must be so lonesome. Not to skate in New York this winter is being

every day. Come in some day next week--we may have them then.

Not until that moment did I know just how much I wanted to skate. It was outrageous. In fact, it was simply ridiculous that in a big city like New York one could not be fitted with a pair of skates. Why I had to skate. Life would be one long weary drag of disappointment until I did skate. And there were fully a hundred others clamoring around me in the same condition. Many of them I met afterward leaping from shop to shop, trying to prove that what the young man spoke was an exaggeration of the truth, and growing more discouraged with every leap. I expect to meet them all in a week back at the same old stand, still clamoring.

Not a No. 9 skate to be had in the city of New York!

much of the skating madness is explained. What must such a glow mean to the tired business man, gladdened by the sun and the fresh air, to the society woman, sickened with bridge and balls; to the biased restaurateur, for whom the grape has lost its kick?

By crossing the palm of a skate boy with silver I was hurriedly laced into a set of gliders. A lucky person in uniform who trod the ice just as easily as we do the earth essayed to guide me over the slippery surface. Mercy, how one's ankles wobble. I was carried back to those days in Ohio when the gang used to sneak down to the quarry after school and play hockey on the ice. The quarry was taboo in the homes, there being a popular belief to the effect that the quarry lake was bottomless, a shivery sort of a story that lent the real thrill to the sport.

Three-fourths of the skaters there must have been carrying around with them visions of the old pond or the canal or the little stream down by the factory or the lake over near the woods.

All the world and his wife were on skates. Young girls of 14 crossed hands with young girls of 40. Grandmothers giggled and shook their shoulders and others conducted themselves in a debonair manner. Grandfathers tried to look serious and ended in a foolish smile, their feet shooting right out from under them. Slim folks and fat folks, tall folks and short folks, grave and gay, blonde and brunette, weak and strong, careful and careless, rich and poor, all mingled in one great big fun frolic.

Here we have an ambitious follower of the fads. She is built on the same general lines as the battleship Texas, but a little thing like this can't stop one once the skating bug gets to buzz.

zing around. Two hundred and ninety-seven pounds avoirdupois? Piff, pout! What's that? A mere trifle. Besides, the way it is great for reducing, this skating.

Why the Texas built person should annex for herself the smallest, the most anemic and from the standpoint of such eminent authority as Mr. Jess Edmund the most helpless instructor of the time, is the interest of the perversion of human nature or the whirl of the wheel of chance.

Anyhow, there they were, Texas and Tiny--the eager apostle of the new pleasure creed and his unhappy victim. By all the laws of humanity it was a plain case for the S. P. C. A. Every other minute the floor would skid out from under the feet of Texas, whereupon Tiny would be called upon to constitute himself an Atlas and juggle 297 pounds of bulk back to poise. Perspiration dripped from his pale brow. Never before in the history of modern labor has so much work been done for the miserly wage of 75 cents per half hour.

At last the gong. The agony is ended. Tiny falls limp and lifeless on the friendly ice, whence he is half lifted and carried by a couple of pitying confreres. Texas limps blithely toward the skate boy. The back of her legs are about two inches shorter than the front and her knees act like those of a teetotaler after his second bottle of Scotch, but she is game.

"I'll be back to-morrow," she puffs. "To-morrow! Ye gods and goat getters! Bring on the next victim."

Anent the 75 cents per half hour, there was one unformal exploiter of the sport whizzing around with a swirl of black velvet, white fox and eyes the color of wood violets. Here

was a man who really enjoyed his job. Gladly would he have instructed such a pupil the entire afternoon for nothing.

"Wouldn't you know it?" murmured a pretty girl with cheeks dabbled scarlet by the cold. "All made up for the part and can't play it."

She indicated a well nourished woman hobbling along on the arm of an instructor. The beginner wore all the trappings of the sport, from a natty orange and white knitted cap with sweater to match right on down to a pair of white kid skating boots equipped with racing skates.

"Always be suspicious when you see them all dolled up in skating costumes

## Prevalent Epidemic of Ice Madness Blamed for Shortage in This Necessary of Life

clean sport. It is better than dancing, which is too often a matter of low ceilings, shaded lights, air clogged with smoke and heat. Skating surrounds itself with a healthy atmosphere. It is bulky good exercise. It sets the blood and the brain racing. If New York had to have something new, it couldn't have hit on a happier thought than skating."

back home on the old pond the boys used to build a fire on the bank so you could warm your fingers and toes when they were so cold you couldn't feel them any more?

Well, the Biltmore is nothing like this. You skate a while, then you stroll behind the French windows, still skated, wade through the soft pile of the velvet carpets, and seated comfortably over a tea table, nibble dainty sandwiches or sip orange pekoe.

"Skating is more popular every day," declared the charge d'affaires of the Ice Gardens. "Society is absolutely devoted to the sport. We might as well print the social register as a list of our skating guests."

A young girl who must have been the Pavlova of the ice, a vision in white broadcloth trimmed with bright rose and white checks, began balltossing across the garden. Society stood back, gasped, gushed and poured more orange pekoe. Small wonder it is a popular sport. Here is all the fun of it without any of the unpleasanties.



A daring holdup at the St. Nicholas Rink.

about as clumsy as pitching a tent in the middle of the Sahara.

For the gliders are the very latest metropolitan fave. They are the ultimate thing in frivolities. They were taken on the end of the Fads and Fancies column a second and a half before the amusement page went to press and the paper has been issuing notices on them ever since.

If you are inclined to doubt the success of the gliders as a New York fad, linger in the vicinity of any ice pond or palace any time at all and watch what happens. In the historic terms of the varieties, they are "A knockout, that's all, a knockout."

In time a weary-eyed young man with a damp brow and a forced air of alacrity came to my rescue.

"A pair of shoes with skates attached," I said.

The obliging one took a hasty inventory of my feet.

"Sorry to disappoint you, madame, but you wear a No. 9 skate. We are out of that number."

"You are?" I queried like "Oh, then I shall go to Jones & Smith."

"They have been out of that number since before Christmas."

"Perhaps White & —"

"They are out too. In fact, there is not a pair of No. 9's to be found in the city. We're hoping for a shipment

anyhow? You don't suppose the skate manufacturers had anything to do with it, do you?"

"You can search me!" offered Mr. Fellows of St. Nicholas Ice Rink when the question of origin was put to him. From above floated faintly the roar of the sliding molds, mingled with snatches of loud music. "All I know is that the public has suddenly gone mad on the subject. Why, I've had to raise my prices twice to thin the crowds. They were actually skating in lockstep. Go up and try it yourself and see."

Right away there was a glow of enthusiasm. If all skaters experience this glow and of course they do--



New York even puts the Orient on ice.



Club day at the Biltmore Ice Gardens.

like that," continued the girl, buttoning up her own simple street suit preparatory to getting off. "Nine times out of nine they are in it not for the sport but for the clothes."

Saying which she struck out in long graceful sweeps.

Past the orange sweater she flew, in and out among young men, middle aged men, men with snow on their temples, around women of every size and condition, side by side with kiddies, and then, with one perfect parabola, she cut off the further end of the ice roped in for the fancy skaters who, by right of conquest, claimed by themselves.

The band struck up. The fun grew more furious. On with the skates. The one who can stand alone on the ice, who can go on being a railbird without a tingling of the feet, must be as cool as the glittering sheet of ice that looks so easy to negotiate and proves so difficult.

Downstage the manager of St. Nick told me he was preparing for a fashion show of summer skating costumes. It all seems the ice craze is to be carried right on into June, perhaps even further.

How perfectly sweet--a white or orange frock flowered in lavender enhanced by a big floppy leathorn garden hat bearing bunches of lilacs, or perhaps a pale pink muslin with lace insertions. Could anything be more incongruous for ice wear. Or could such a notion be conceived anywhere except in the pleasure mad metropolis?

"Will it last?" repeated this same manager, packing away bills in bales and securing them with rubber bands. "Of course it will. Skating is a good

Up in the Jardin de Danse atop the New York roof one of these Persian palaces has just been completed, and there, in the courtyard, with a giant disappearing electric fountain for a background, is a miniature skating pond. In the dim distance a band of Persian players in native garb dispense the latest scrapations of the Broadway school of composition. On the banks of the pond non-skid pleasure seekers will be dancing around. Overhead glittering silver balls of all sizes reflect the dull glow of the silver walls and in the dim shadows hundreds of golden throated birds of the tropics warble their wonder down at the skaters.

Basking beneath the shade of a sheltering palm watching an ice frolic is going to be bizarre enough, even for New York.

To find skating at its smartest sit for a while in the cozy winter garden at the Hotel Biltmore and gaze out through the crystal of the long French windows across the crystal of the ice gardens.

Remember how when you skated

frolics, ice water baths and such like.

At the Ice Palace, a part of Castles in the Air, there was enough warmth in the mere mention of skating to melt the ice right off the stage.

"It was one grand idea, the skate," enthused Monsieur Pierre. "We are besieged. We do not know where to get enough instructors. If we had a dozen, two dozen times the space it would be too little. Ah--what a fine sport for your tired business man."

So the poor, long suffering, tired business man is in for another battle, is he? And just when he has reached the point where he can get up and do a fox-trot without maiming a lot of innocent dancers too. This is really too much. After spending all his spare money to induce some hobbled, stunted, misshapen, and generally unattractive, to help him solve the riddle of keeping his feet on the floor he has to go and put them in a pair of skates and begin all over again. Suppose he does master this? There will only be a new one waiting for him at the end of the trail. Aw--what's the use?

## \$500 TO \$30,000 IN A YEAR IS RECORD OF CARNEY'S POINT

The following story of the remarkable growth of Carney's Point, N. J., through its activity in war munitions, is especially timely in view of the fact that the Du Pont powder works there were, on last Saturday night, the scene of one of the numerous fatal explosions in munition plants that have occurred recently. Two men were killed, many injured and evidence pointed toward a plot to destroy the entire plant.

Carney's Point in Salem county, N. J., belongs to the distinction of having made the most remarkable growth in population of any place in America during the present year.

You will be disappointed if you look for Carney's Point on any map or in the latest geographicals. Its location is not given. Guide books fail to indicate its existence, and as a matter of fact there are few outside of the 30-40 that settled there during the present year who know that it forms a small triangular piece of lowland projecting into the Delaware River almost opposite the city of Wilmington. A year ago it was farm land, and within the radius of five miles the inhabitants of the New Jersey shore only numbered about 500.

People of Wilmington like to refer to Carney's Point as "the Eesen of New Jersey," and by that name it is generally known by those who are familiar with the work that is being done there. For on this little point of lowland in southern Jersey more munitions of war are turned out every day than anywhere else in the United States. Last February the E. I. du Pont de Nemours Powder Company had a small plant at Carney's Point in which 250 men were employed in the manufacture of smokeless powder. It is stated that now there are more than 15,000 men employed there and that the result of their labors is the manufacture of 650,000 pounds of smokeless powder every day.

The number of freight cars running daily into the plant with supplies and out again with powder averages about one hundred. The bi-weekly payroll exceeds \$200,000 and the company is putting up new buildings all the time. Everything points to at least two more years of activity at Carney's Point. It is declared that the work on the present contracts cannot be finished before the end of the summer of 1917.

According to the du Pont code visitors are regarded in the same danger-

ous classification as matches, liquor and cameras. The law at Carney's Point is the du Pont police. It must be said, however, that their rule is fair, considering that they have nothing else to do but to protect the property of their employers and the lives of 15,000 men.

Whether you go by ferry from Wilmington or by train from Camden, there is one of the du Pont police camps and the plants, which extend over several square miles, are covered by a high wire fence, and always on patrol is the inevitable guard. By night bright searchlights illumine the road, the works and the camps. The lighting system is separate from the plant that lights the highways and is controlled with the works, so there is little chance for an "accident" to happen at night to the lights.

There are two camps, one for the foreigners and one for the Americans. The foreign laborers, mostly Italians, have several large barracks. Their coats are good and there is plenty of covering. They hire their own cooks. There are about two thousand of them. Aside from small fights, which the guards soon quell, there is little disturbance.

The Americans, exclusive of the engineering force, occupy another large enclosure. They have small rooms, and four men have bunks. The food is good and is prepared by colored cooks and served by colored wait-

assistants, and there will be a physical director as soon as the new gymnasium is completed.

The powder plant Y. M. C. A. is somewhat different from the usual city association. The men come in and smoke, for when a man who smokes has gone without tobacco for eight hours he is going to some place where he can smoke. Sundays many of the games can be played, but nothing is sold then. In the afternoon a religious meeting is conducted at the motion picture theatre.

It is easy to get a job at Carney's Point; they hire hundreds of men a day. But the applicant must be healthy and not have a German name nor look like a German. Whether you keep the law depends upon your ability to keep away from matches and liquor. From the cities and the country the workers come, for the wages run from \$2.50 a day up, and it is said that some skilled operators in the powder shops get as much as \$15 a day.

Directly opposite the plant is a strip of land that the company does not own, and it is here that the town's Broadway has sprung up. In about a score of hastily constructed buildings you can buy anything to eat or wear. Itinerant merchants with pushcarts take their place on the road too, and there are the fakery selling "gold" watches and souvenirs. In addition there are a good many runners representing Wilmington clothing concerns. But those most patronized are the toy sellers. There are no children at Carney's Point, but wherever they are they are not forgotten on pay day.

Nine hundred guards protect the plant, and each seems to be well and carefully selected for his duty. Most of them are former army or navy men and there is no doubt of their soldierly appearance. There is a fully organized department with all the usual oficers, and the guards live at the barracks maintained strictly on military lines. Major Sylvester, formerly head of the Washington Police Department, is in charge of the guards at all of the du Pont works.

Carney's Point, which got along very nicely in quiet Quaker fashion for nearly 200 years, does not know just how to take the boom which the town has undergone. However, a great many of the Quaker inlets have been disposed of their real estate at unthought of prices.

Vacant lots have soared in value and dwellings and stores are rapidly going up on lots close to the business section. Additions have been built to the old stores and several houses have been converted into shops and restaurants.

## STATESMEN CONSIDERED AS MERE HUMAN BEINGS

By FRED C. KELLY.

LOOK first at the United States Senate, and then, for purposes of contrast, picture for one moment, please, this scene:

The town band is marching down the main street of Marion, Ohio, past the Court House, playing a stirring piece of music for the villagers, peasants and innocent bystanders. Well up toward the head of the procession is young Warren G. Harding, scarcely 17 years of age, but playing, nevertheless, the cornet. His cheeks are flushed, his mouth is needlessly puckered, and his eyes glister beetle like under the strain.

A bystander tries to still another bystander and exclaims:

"That young Harding can play a cornet, by jimmies, about as good as anybody. I'll bet you he'll soon be good enough to travel!"

To suggest that a fellow townsman is destined to "travel" is about as high a compliment as one can bestow in a town the size of Marion, Ohio, was then. It meant that Warren possessed a degree of musical skill which would make him sought after to go forth and appear before critical and cultured audiences in the big cities of the country.

As a matter of fact, Warren's ambitions did not go that far--not yet. He simply wanted to play the slip horn, or slide trombone, and then to master the tuba. To march down the main street, playing the ponderous tuba would be, so Warren felt, not to have lived in vain.

That was all the glory he yearned for. The idea of a seat in the United States Senate did not even occur to him. That came years later. And with all due respect for any of the folks in Marion, Ohio, thought of him as a future United States Senator.

Yet to-day Warren G. Harding, junior Senator from Ohio, comes nearer looking the part than almost any other member of that well known and august body. He is tall, large and important looking. His face is one of supine gravity and unmarred by whiskers or other blemishes. Close cropped hair, prematurely gray and parted in the middle, or thereabouts, completes the scheme.

Harding took early to politics. Many years ago he was fired from a job as reporter on a Democratic paper in

Marion for wearing a Blaine campaign hat.

There was another paper in the town, a little old amary looking sheet, three columns wide, and read by nobody--not even by the proofreader. It was published simply because the owner was an optimist and thought perhaps it might be a better paper at some time in the future.

Warren Harding and two others bought this paper, putting in \$200 or so apiece and assuming a mortgage for the rest. After a few weeks Harding's partners grew tired of their publishing activities and earnestly desired to give up their part of the struggle. One at a time, they "sold out," which consisted simply of turning their share of the mortgage over to Harding.

He, too, wished that he might sell out, but the trouble was that he had no partners left to sell out to. So he had to keep on getting out the paper, with the result that to-day it is one of the most prosperous small town dailies in the Middle West and yields an income which enables him to keep hard help and to carry two extra cassings, if need be, on his running board.

For a number of years Harding had been hankering to occupy some political place of honor and trust. His election to the United States Senate gave him the biggest thrill of his career--with one exception. For the exception we are obliged to go back to the day when he played the cornet in the Marion band.

There was to be a big celebration over at Findlay and the leading feature was to be a big band contest, in which bands from all over Ohio would compete for cash prizes. Now Warren Harding had an idea that Marion had the best little band of any small town in the State. He took it on himself to enter the band in the contest at Findlay.

To his dismay he learned that no band could take part except in regular band uniforms. The Marion band simply had to have uniforms, though no member had enough ready money to buy even a hat for the drum major. So Warren Harding went to a leading citizen of Marion and asked for a loan of \$150 for band uniforms.

"I'll pay you back within a week," promised Warren.

"And how can you raise the money so soon?" asked the leading citizen.

"Oh, sir," replied the future Senator in a declaratory tone, "with the money we get as prize in the contest over at Findlay."

The leading citizen could not resist such confidence of victory and put up the money.

When the contest was over the members of the Marion band returned home rather than stay to hear the news that they were defeated, all except Warren Harding. He held that they would take first prize remained unshaken. And sure enough his band got the decision. There being no other members present, he and his trusty little old cornet marched past the judges' stand all alone amid the plaudits of an admiring multitude.

Do you wonder that taking a seat in the United States Senate sinks to second place in momentousness alongside of that?

A concern that manufactures rubber heels employed a young woman recently to make a poll of prominent men in Washington as to their views about the physical and spiritual profit to be derived from wearing rubber heels. The young woman called a number of statesmen by telephone, among them Senator Stone of Missouri. Stone's secretary happened to be out of the office and he himself answered the call.

"Does Senator Stone favor rubber heels?" inquired the woman, thinking she was addressing the secretary.

Now, Senator Stone has been known throughout Missouri, and elsewhere, for many years as Gum Shoe Bill. He leaped to the conclusion that some fresh young woman was needlessly undressing him by asking "A Texas Street?" So he said never a word but slammed up the receiver.

Senators O'Gorman of New York and Phelan of California look more alike than almost any other pair of Senators doubles ever placed before the public. They are of about the same height--a trifle below the average--each has a nice little set of close cropped whiskers; each is suave, plump, silk haired, dignified and able. Just because they look so much alike and so cunningly together, O'Gorman and Phelan are to be seen, in each other's company a great deal.

O'Gorman has a large family. Phelan has none. Phelan is a bachelor, but is also a philanthropist, as if he spends almost as much money as if he were married. Nobody knows how many millions he is worth. If he wished to he could put in the long winter evenings doing nothing but just counting his money.

Senator John W. Kern of Indiana has an assistant, one Jerry Foley, for years a Democratic worker in Indianapolis politics. As far back as Foley's family tree can be traced his folks have all been Democrats. Anything he might say reflecting in the slightest degree upon the Democratic party is regarded by Foley as a personal affront.

On his way to Indianapolis a while ago Foley sat in a Pullman smoking compartment listening to the observations of a second class stranger who complained that his business was dull. Foley did not wish to nip into the conversation, but the stranger talked as if the Democratic Administration was responsible for his business troubles. Foley, however, he kept at it, at Foley as if he were the proximate cause of everything that was wrong.

So in a casual, polite tone Foley inquired of the stranger what his line of business might be.

"I'm in the undertaking business," replied the man.

At that Foley flared right up.

"You've got a lot of license to kick about poor business," argued Foley savagely, "with like to see everybody in your business ship to death. What do you want the Wilson Administration to do have a country-wide epidemic of Asiatic cholera?"

About the most picturesque thing in Congress at the present time is Representative Charles Davis of Texas. The Hon. Mr. Davison is the first Texas Congressman in many years to live up to the national standards set by the late Charles Davis when he dashed off "A Texas Street." He stands six and one-half feet high, wears leather boots under his trousers, a tailed coat, a muffler for a collar, the broadest brimmed hat since the Merry Widow craze, and a tropical growth of brown shaped whiskers. He suggests somewhat a cross between the last of the forty-runners and a moving picture sheriff.

Burglar Took a Bath.

St. Louis, Jan. 15.--The home of Fred L. Herman of Belleville was entered recently, but was not robbed. The burglar, however, took a bath and then slept in the Herman bed. The water he used was in the bath when Mr. and Mrs. Herman returned home.